

INTL 4615: The Politics of Disease Control

University of Georgia

Maymester 2019, Fully online

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Welcome!

This is a class about how governments solve (or fail to solve) a core problem facing any society - how to limit the damaging effects of disease. Recent global epidemics like Ebola and Zika have demonstrated that disease can threaten social order and prosperity. What may be harder to perceive is the crucial and complex role that governments play in preventing and controlling disease. Our purpose will be to better understand the link between political institutions and disease outcomes. We begin by asking why disease is such a difficult social problem. We then use contemporary and historical examples of successful and failed attempts at disease control to understand how governments respond in the face of this challenge.

How will you be graded?

I will administer two **exams** over the course of the Maymester. Dates for the exams appear in the course schedule below. Exams are entirely multiple choice, and will be administered online via ELC. Each exam will cover all of the material that has been presented in the course at the time the exam is administered. Good performance on the exams requires engagement with the all of the course materials, especially the readings.

Table 1: Assignments

Item	Prop. of grade
Midterm exam	30%
End-of-semester exam	30%
Response paper 1	20%
Response paper 2	20%

You will also have to complete two **response papers**. Due dates for the response papers are listed below. Additional information on the response papers, including formatting and other requirements, is available on ELC.

Make-up and extension policy: It is your responsibility to complete all assignments and exams according to the schedule provided here. No make up exams will be allowed. No extensions for assignments will be granted.

Ground rules

You are responsible for being self-motivated, self-directed, active learners. I expect you to comply with university policy and use common sense. You should complete all of the course assignments and participate fully in all of our activities. A complete list of the course policies is posted on my website.

Goals and teaching philosophy

When this course is finished, you should:

- Understand how social choice concepts apply to disease control
- Be familiar with a wide range of examples of disease control, focusing on the role of governance
- Improve your ability to think critically about these topics

As your professor, it is my responsibility to create an environment that fosters your learning. This includes keeping materials up to date on the course elc, and otherwise providing a well-organized course. You are responsible for taking advantage of that environment. If any aspect of the course is impeding your learning, please communicate that to me in whatever way you feel most comfortable.¹

¹A note about my name: Feel free to call me Micah or Professor Redman or Professor Gell-Redman.

Course Schedule

The following course schedule describes the pace at which I will expect you to move through the material. There are two aspects of the schedule that will be particularly important for you. First, you will see the dates on which your exams will be administered and your response papers will be due. Second, throughout the Maymester, I will be scheduling online office hours to ask questions that you may have about the readings. While you are free to ask any questions about the material during office hours, I will use the course schedule to guide the focus of my answers.

Most readings will be available via UGA's electronic course reserves system (password: infection). Please let me know if you have trouble locating the readings.

Day 1: Foundations

Topics:

- Expectations for the course
- Foundations of social science
 - Stylization
 - Hypotheticals
- Public goods and collective action problems

Required reading:

- Selection from **Krugman (1995)***
- **Troesken (2015, Preface)** *

*These readings are available on elc

Days 2-4: Vaccination as a collective action problem

Topics:

- Vaccination today
- Vaccination in the past

- Smallpox eradication

Required reading:

- [Nyhan et al. \(2014\)](#)
 - [Nyhan and Reifler \(2015\)](#)
 - [Obaro and Palmer \(2003\)](#)
 - [Troesken \(2015, Chapter 4\)](#)
 - [Stepan \(2011, Chapter 6\)](#)
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Days 6-8: Disease control and environmental quality

Topics:

- Control of diseases linked to water quality
- Control of diseases linked to air quality
- Externalities in the provision of public goods

Required reading:

- [Troesken \(2004, Chapter 4\)](#)
- [Cutler and Miller \(2005\)](#)
- [Frerichs \(2016, Selection TBD\)](#)
- [Clay and Troesken \(2010\)](#)
- Additional required reading TBD

May 28, midterm exam

May 29, response paper 1 due

Days 10-13: HIV and malaria

Topics:

- HIV and ethnic diversity in Africa and Brazil
- HIV and stigma
- Malaria eradication in the past and today

Required reading:

- **Lieberman (2009)**, Chapter 4
- **Humphreys (2001)**, Chapter 3)
- On the current efforts to eradicate malaria **Newby et al. (2016)**
- Additional readings on ELC

June 4, final quiz

June 5, response paper 2 due

References

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- Cutler, David and Grant Miller. 2005. "The Role of Public Health Improvements in Health Advances: The Twentieth-Century United States." *Demography* 42(1):1–22.
- Frerichs, Ralph R. 2016. *Deadly River: Cholera and Cover-Up in Post-Earthquake Haiti*. Cornell University Press.
- Humphreys, Margaret. 2001. *Malaria: Poverty, Race and Public Health in the United States*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore MD.
- Krugman, Paul. 1995. *Development, Geography, and Economic Theory*. MIT Press chapter The Fall and Rise of Development Economics.
- Lieberman, Evan. 2009. *Boundaries of Contagion: How Ethnic Politics Have Shaped Government Responses to AIDS*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Newby, Gretchen, Adam Bennett, Erika Larson, Chris Cotter, Rima Shretta, Allison A Phillips and Richard G. A. Feachem. 2016. "The path to eradication: a progress report on the malaria-eliminating countries." *The Lancet* 387:1775–1784.
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